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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 893  
By Person

A RESOLUTION to honor the Richland Elementary Education Fund (REEF) as an award-winning program.

WHEREAS, the Tennessee General Assembly is pleased to specially recognize and commend those superlative educational programs that have brought national attention to their school systems, and the associated educators and parents who have given unreservedly of themselves to develop this state's most precious natural resource—our children; and

WHEREAS, the developers of the Richland Elementary Education Fund (REEF) are one such extraordinary group of people who are deserving of praise and commendation; and

WHEREAS, at the Parent Involvement Awards Luncheon held on April 27, 2000 in Nashville, the REEF program was selected by the Tennessee State Board of Education as an award-winning program; and

WHEREAS, at the luncheon, REEF was formally recognized and received a \$1,000 monetary award along with a commemorative plaque; and

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WHEREAS, the REEF program was implemented in 1998 through a partnership between Richland Elementary School, the Richland Elementary Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), and the Richland Elementary School Leadership Council to promote and increase parental involvement at the Memphis City School; the program is designed to encourage parents to become closely involved in their children's education; and

WHEREAS, the program was spearheaded by the principal of Richland Elementary, Kevin McCarthy, the assistant principal, Mrs. Sharon McNary, and Richland parents who were endeavoring to enhance student learning and promote partnering with school staff and the administration; and

WHEREAS, organized to support, promote, assist, and supplement the educational programs of Richland, REEF provides an entry level for parents to include themselves in school affairs by asking them to volunteer ten hours or more per semester; and

WHEREAS, since the implementation of the program, Richland Elementary's parental involvement has increased significantly. In addition to the PTO membership surpassing 100% with the participation of other family members besides parents, parents have become prominent figures around the school, graciously serving as field trip chaperones, acting as tutors, making resource materials for the classrooms, reading to the younger classes, discussing career opportunities with older students, and producing their monthly newsletter, the "Red Letter"; and

WHEREAS, many parents have also joined the School Leadership Council and participate in decision-making; other parents help to provide funds for extra computers through the Technology Committee, donate books to the library through the "Titles for Tomorrow" program, and raise money for support programs through various fundraisers; and

WHEREAS, as a result, Richland Elementary School has garnered recognition on the local, state, and national levels. The school has been named a Blue Ribbon School and has received the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, has been recognized by the National

Science Foundation, and has been praised on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" for the tremendous level of parental involvement at the school; and

WHEREAS, the teachers and staff at Richland are cherished by the school's parents; these exemplary professionals are never-ending sources of inspiration who motivate their students to reach their full potential, perhaps the greatest of all teaching gifts; and

WHEREAS, with the increased involvement of their parents in their education, the students of Richland Elementary now pay closer attention to classroom teaching, more fully communicate their school activities to their parents, and complete homework assignments more regularly; there has also been significant improvement in the students' homework grades, and their achievement test scores; and

WHEREAS, the \$1,000 award that the program has received will be used to supplement the after-school tutoring program that helps students with academic deficiencies; such funds will also be used to increase transportation assistance, and enhance educational materials for tutoring and schoolwork; and

WHEREAS, exemplary programs such as Richland Elementary School's REEF program inspire all of us to imagine a better future and to create a better world by encouraging excellence in students; and

WHEREAS, Richland Elementary School and its superb Educational Fund are perfect examples of institutions totally committed to quality education and the highest ideals of public service and should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby honor and commend the administrators, educators, parents and students associated with the Richland Elementary Educational Fund upon being recognized as an award-winning program by the State Board of Education, applaud their tireless pursuit of excellence in education, and wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.